

BETTER TEACHERS' SALARIES AND LONGER SCHOOL TERMS

APPEARING before a joint meeting of the Legislative and the Retirement committees of the Virginia Education Association recently, Dr. Sidney B. Hall, Superintendent of Public Instruction, urged that increases should be provided in the pay of Virginia teachers to forestall their withdrawal from teaching into the business world.

He cited the instance of a Richmond school principal who resigned a \$2,000 job to accept one in business paying \$2,800. The average salary now paid in Virginia to city elementary school teachers is \$1,029, to county elementary school teachers, \$535; to city high school teachers, \$1,353; to county high school teachers, \$778.

A letter addressed to all division superintendents and school board members of the state has also gone out from the superintendent's office in support of this issue.

"During the past few weeks," Dr. Hall wrote, "my attention has been called to the very serious problem of securing adequately prepared teachers for vacancies that are occurring in the teaching force of the State. In addition the point is being made that many of our best prepared teachers are being lured away from teaching positions by more lucrative offers in other fields of endeavor. This is a most distressing situation. After discussing it with many superintendents, I am convinced that there is only one answer to the problem: In all cases there should be full restoration of salaries and for most teachers substantial increases should be provided. We cannot expect to attract to the teaching profession teachers of the best intelligence and ability unless we offer adequate compensation. Neither can we hold those already in the profession unless we pay them salaries commensurate with their training, experience, and the responsibilities placed upon them.

"May I, therefore, urge you to provide in your budget for 1937-38 adequate salaries for teachers? If this is done, you will have guaranteed to the children their inherent right to be well taught.

Another matter that should be given serious consideration is the problem of the length of school term. For several years we have been maintaining a uniform eight months' term, or 160 teaching days. In fact we averaged 169 days during the past year for both elementary and high schools. Prior to the establishment of the eight months' term for all schools, we maintained nine months for high schools throughout the state. Many of the supporting schools, however, were maintained for much less than nine months. It now seems highly desirable that we seriously consider the establishment of a nine months' school term as the minimum for both elementary and high schools for the session 1937-38. To accomplish this, provision must be made in the annual budget for such extra days as may be necessary to make up a full nine months' school term.

"In this connection it might be well to mention that the new manual of administration for high schools will be ready for distribution in the early fall. It will be our desire to accredit all schools in accordance with the standards set up in this manual. One of the standards for accredited high schools will be a nine months' term, or 180 teaching days; and, in addition, all schools serving as feeders to the accredited, consolidated high schools will likewise hold a similar term. Because of this I think it highly important that you consider the question of providing funds for the nine months' school term at the earliest possible moment."

Good breeding consists in *concealing* how much we think of ourselves and how little we think of the other person.—MARK TWAIN.